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DR. J.B. KERSWILL'S
ANNUAL REPORT.

JANUARY 1895 9 1896

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To the

Chairman and Members of the St. Germans

Rural Sanitary Authority.

Gentlemen,

It is again my duty to submit to you my annual report as to the health and sanitary condition of the Union during the past year.

The district has an area of 44,712 acres and the population on the census of 1891 was 15,080

During the year 1895 the number of births registered in the whole district was 386 being a rate of 25.5 per thousand.

The total number of deaths from all causes was 222 making a rate of 14.7 per thousand as against 17.10 in 1894.

Thirty six only of these were among children under one year of age which gives a rate of 2.3 per thousand of the population which is a marked improvement on the year preceding, and ninety four were at sixty five years old and upwards.

Thirteen deaths were recorded as being due to Zymotic disease which is only a decrease of five on the year preceding.

They were:-

4 from Diphtheria

2 from Typhoid fever

1 from Scarlet fever

2 from Measles

1 from Whooping cough

3 from Diarrhoea which though scheduled as a Zymotic disease cannot in either of these three cases be considered as such occurring at the ages of 72-74 and 31 respectively; including these the death rate from Zymotic diseases is .8 per thousand.

Ten deaths have occurred from cancer showing very little

variation from the three preceding years which were twelve fourteen and eleven respectively.

One hundred and sixteen cases of infectious diseases have been notified during the year as against fifty seven in 1894 viz:-

70 from Diphtheria
11 from Typhoid fever
19 from Scarlet fever
16 from Erysipelas

making a rate of 7.6 per thousand of the population which is a marked increase on the preceding year in consequence of the large number of cases of diphtheria which occurred, but notwithstanding this great increase in cases notified the Zymotic death rate per thousand is considerably less, viz:- .8 as against 1.19.

Of the three hundred and eighty six births thirty six died under one year of age showing a rate of 93.4 per thousand births, or 2.3 per thousand of the population.

Eleven of these were due to diseases of the respiratory organs and seventeen from premature birth and general debility from birth.

Two hundred and ninety six children were successfully vaccinated during the year and sixty seven are returned as unvaccinated which includes deaths removals and postponements. taking into consideration the number of births registered in the last four months of the years it shows that vaccination is most carefully carried out throughout the Union.

In the St. Germans division 74 births were registered and 39 deaths shewing a birth rate of 25.7 and a death rate of 13.5 per thousand respectively as against 24.67 and 16.68 in 1894.

Of these ten deaths occurred among children under one year old and eighteen at the age of sixty five and upwards.

No deaths have been recorded from Zymotic disease.

Twenty two cases were notified as against twenty one in the preceding year, viz:-

15 from Scarlet fever

3 from Diphtheria

4 from Erysipelas

In January an isolated case of scarlet fever occurred in Sheviack parish and from the beginning of February to May five cases occurred intermittently in different parts of St Germans Parish. In August it broke out at Polbathick and at first threatened to be the beginning of a serious epidemic a child being sent to school in an infected state for which proceedings were at once taken under Sec. 126 of the Public Health Act 1875. The family was immediately isolated and all the children from the village kept from school with the result that only seven cases occurred in four families. Two other cases occurred in September at St. Germans Hut evidently contracted from a party visiting there.

The three cases of diphtheria were totally unconnected one with another being at different parts of the year and in different parts of the division.

In March 1894 a Local Government Board Inspector held an inquiry at Donderry with respect to the drainage and water supply of the village which has up to the present time only resulted in the presentation of the plans and the analysis of the water from the proposed source at Trerieve which was pronounced to be good for domestic and other purposes.

The supply of water for the inhabitants at the top of the hill (Quarry Street) St. Germans which I have more than once submitted to your notice has been improved, a pump with a very good supply of water having been fixed within a reasonable distance of the houses. The inhabitants of the houses in the Quay Road are still in want of a better supply. This is I am informed in contemplation, but it is incumbent on the Sanitary Authority to see it carried out.

In June I called the attention of the Agent to the property to the necessity of providing drains for slop and surface water for the cottages at Tideford Quay which has since been satisfactorily carried out.

A new sewer has been laid in the hill from the cross roads to Tideford bridge to drain the houses on the hill which was in a very unsanitary condition, as this is only of service to a very small portion of the village I would urge the Authority to complete the drainage of the village during the ensuing year.

The stream at Hessenford which receives the drainage of some privies above the bridge is often, in hotweather when there is but little water running, offensive and injurious to health and demands the attention of the Authority before another summer.

At the farm cottages at Trewinckle there is urgent need of closet accommodation, this fact was brought under your notice in September and I was informed the Agent of the property was communicated with concerning it, but up to this time nothing has been done.

The well at Craithole becoming fouled by the wash of the hill during heavy rains it has been decided to enclose it and fix a pump at the top of the hill which will be a very great benefit to the inhabitants. I trust no time will be lost in carrying this into effect.

In January and February I received notices of two outbreaks of Anthrax on Minard Farm which were promptly attended to with satisfactory results.

In the South division there were 203 births giving a birth rate of 24.8 per thousand and 118 deaths making the death rate 14.4 per thousand as against 17.85 per thousand in the year preceding.

Of these 14 were under one year of age and 48 at the age of sixty five and upwards.

Of the deaths under one year of age 2 were from premature birth 5 from defective vitality, 5 from bronchitis and disease of the air passages, 2 from convulsions, 1 from disease of the intestine and 1 from tubercular meningitis.

Seven deaths were recorded as being due to Zymotic disease, viz:-

2 from diphtheria

1 from Typhoid fever

1 from Whooping cough

3 from Diarrhoea

making the death rate from these causes .8 per thousand as against 1.46 in 1894 and 3.05 in 1893.

During a great part of the year we have been much troubled by the prevalence of diphtheria at Torpoint and the immediate neighbourhood - commencing on April 3rd and continuing to the end of December.

The number have been 58 viz:- 4 in April, 3 in May, 5 in July, 6 in August, 7 in September, 21 in October, 9 in November and 3 in December. Only two cases terminated fatally.

Fifty three of these occurred in the town of Torpoint with one death.

rd.

On July 23 I made a special report with regard to the outbreak after a careful inspection of the town and neighbourhood.

The commencement of the disease is still obscure as the Drainage in the locality where the first cases occurred was not in any way defective and the children had not been away from home for some months. In only two cases were the drains found seriously defective with one case of overcrowding and in one case the frequent landing of town refuse near the doors and windows of the house appeared to be a probable cause.

The milk supply was obtained from six different dairies varying in distance from half a mile to three miles from the town which were all clean and well kept the cans being clean and properly scoured and the cows all appeared in good health.

The school rooms were clean, of adequate size and well ventilated.

It will be seen that until October the disease had not assumed an epidemic character a few cases occurring and then an interval of from three weeks to a month without any fresh cases. In October however the number having so much increased it was considered necessary to close the Wesleyan day school where the majority of the cases attended, for at that time no children who were suffering from the disease were pupils of the National School. The Sunday schools were also both closed by the courtesy of their respective Managers.

It was satisfactory to note that after the schools were closed cases became less frequent and after the 21st of November just a month from the closure of the schools only three fresh cases occurred.

The ages at which the disease occurred were 15 under five years, 22 between five and fifteen, and 16 over fifteen years.

The remaining cases in the division were isolated ones in different parts of the parish of Antony where isolation was able to be carried out more strictly than in the town.

Five cases of typhoid fever were reported during the year at Torpoint one of which was traced to a polluted well which was at once closed, one probably due to the landing of town soil which was at times most injurious to the neighbourhood, and the landing of this has now been prohibited in the town, the remaining three to defective drains.

The water supply throughout the year has been more or

less defective in consequence of a leakage in the storage reservoir which is now being remedied and it is hoped that an abundant and constant supply will be available for the future so that the remaining wells may soon be closed.

The drainage of Macey Street still requires attention as also the sewer at the back of Clarence Terrace where a flushing tank is necessary.

In a narrow lane at the back of Harvey Street there are five closets that are much too small and insufficiently ventilated - they have been complained of as a nuisance by the neighbouring inhabitants, I should recommend that they be removed, and one placed in each garden, in which there is sufficient room, for the use of the several houses.

I also reported on the closets in the Union House which opens into the dormitories and are not properly ventilated. These defects should be remedied without delay.

Various complaints have been brought under my notice with respect to the large number of pigs kept at the back of Gordon Terrace and the boiling of refuse which doubtless must in certain conditions of the atmosphere cause a nuisance which might be avoided.

In November two isolated cases of typhoid fever occurred one at Wilcove the other at one of the Antony lodges in both cases the cause was most obscure the supply of water and milk being good and no fault to be detected in the drainage.

Three cases of typhoid fever occurred at Millbrook one being fatal. In each case the water was taken from wells but there was no evidence that the disease was caused from this source, though in one case it was liable to pollution from the immediate surroundings.

On July 1st a serious nuisance happened in West Street in consequence of a flood of rain which the sewer was unable to discharge with sufficient rapidity so it was forced up the

house drains carrying sewage with it into the houses at the bottom of West Street though this was an exceptional storm some means should be devised to prevent a recurrence of so serious a nuisance.

The public closets on the quay are in course of erection.

The reservoir is not satisfactory though as yet there has been a plentiful supply of water. this question however demands the attention of the Authority to provide for a lengthened drought whenever it may occur.

In October I made a special report in respect to the closet accommodation in Kingsand and Cawsand - In Kingsand there are thirty seven houses without closet accommodation and in fifteen of these there is no room for erecting any, in the other cases they might be provided under certain circumstances.

The dilapidated condition of the sewers in Fore Street and Back Street which I then called your attention to still remains in the same state and the water tables and gullies in Fore Street, which especially in dry weather, become very offensive from the slop water thrown down them settling in puddles, requires attention before another summer.

The pails and house slops from the lower end of the village are still emptied on to the beach a practice which should be discontinued.

The water supply of the village is not sufficient for the requirements of the inhabitants.

In Cawsand there is also a great want of closet accommodation - thirteen houses being unprovided, six of these are without the necessary room and in five cases the landlord will make the necessary provision.

For the houses in both villages which are without any space for building the required accommodation it is essential that a more efficient method of regularly collecting all house refuse be adopted. and be removed to some ground away from

any dwellings where it could be speedily ploughed in or spread over the surface so as not to cause any nuisance injurious to the public health.

In the North division 109 births were registered and 65 deaths making a birth rate of 27.07 per thousand and a death rate of 16.14 per thousand as against 15.89 in the preceding year - Of these 10 were under one year old and 28 at the age of sixty five and upwards. Of the ten under one year of age 3 were from Pneumonia & Bronchitis 2 from premature birth 2 from convulsions, 2 from marasmas and 1 from debility.

Six deaths were recorded as being due to Zymotic diseases viz:-

2 from Diphtheria

2 from Measles

1 from Typhoid fever

1 from Scarlet fever which gives a Zymotic death rate of 1.4 per thousand a slight increase on the preceding years which were .74 in 1894 and .49 in 1893

In the third week in January a case of Diphtheria in a child was reported at Luccombe a farm in the parish of Quethiock which rapidly proved fatal. The house is situated at a lower level than the cattle houses and manure heap the water supply is abundant but at some distance from the house -

In the beginning of October the disease broke out almost simultaneously at Old Barn and Quethiock Village which are about a mile and a half apart, five cases being reported within eight days - in consequence of which the school at Quethiock was closed for a fortnight from the 7th of the month and the cases carefully isolated which restricted the disease to the two houses. One of the cases in the village proved fatal.

A pump has been fixed at the well supplying the majority of the inhabitants and the old well at the upper part of the village which has been for some years closed has been reopened which is

a much needed addition to the water supply of the village.

Another isolated case of Diphtheria occurred at Trebrow Farm in December which was isolated as far as possible.

In February in consequence of an epidemic of measles at Pillaton the school in that village was closed from the 4th to the 25th of the month and again for a week from October 29th owing to the occurrence of a large number of cases of sore throat among the children.

In August an isolated case of typhoid fever occurred at Botusfleming which proved fatal in the following month - the cause of the disease was probably due to his drinking water from a stream running down a valley from a farm yard while he was at work. The more equal distribution of water in Landrake village has been carried out and is so far satisfactory.

The drainage from some pigs houses and a closet in a garden at the back of and above the houses on the south side of the road leading to Nottar bridge is after heavy rains a serious nuisance injurious to the health of the occupiers they should therefore be removed to a greater distance from the dwellings.

An isolated case of Diphtheria occurred in the village in October and though isolation was absolutely impossible the disease did not spread.

A regular system of drainage and water supply is required at Burraton which should receive your attention during the coming year.

The remaining parts of my district do not require special mention.

Four samples of water have been sent to the county analyst one of which from a well at Torpoint was condemned as being unfit for use, in consequence of which the well has been closed.

Thirty six new houses have been built during the year, viz: 2 at Torpoint, 2 at Landrake, 4 at Cowdray, 3 at Burraton, and 25 at Pill. I must again call your attention to the Bye-Laws not dealing with the nuisances in the parish of Landulph and only dealing with slaughter houses in the parishes of Maker and

Landrake with St. Erney, and further that in the clauses relating to the removal of house refuse the contributory place of Cawsand is excluded.

These omissions necessarily limit the usefulness of the Byelaws to a very considerable extent.

In consequence of the continued prevalence of Diphtheria I caused notices to be sent to all the school teachers in the district containing a number of questions to be answered by them, in order that the Sanitary Authority might be better prepared to check any fresh outbreak of Diphtheria or suspicious sore throats.

I consider it satisfactory to note that notwithstanding the large increase of cases notified, rather more than double of the preceding year the Zymotic death rate is so much less viz:- .8 per thousand as against 1.19 per thousand in 1894 clearly showing the improved sanitary condition of the district.

I remain, Gentlemen.

Your obedient Servant

J. BEDFORD KERSWILL

Medical Officer of
Health.

St. Germans

January 1896.

